

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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SECDEF WASHDC
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
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USMISSION USNATO
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: MNUC UK FR
SUBJECT: CONSERVATIVE MP RENEWS CALL FOR UK-FRENCH
NUCLEAR WEAPONS COLLABORATION

SUMMARY. A LEADING CONSERVATIVE PARTY DEFENCE SPOKESMAN
SUGGESTS HMG SHOULD CAREFULLY STUDY THE PRACTICAL POSSI-
BILITY OF COLLABORATION WITH FRANCE IN THE NUCLEAR
WEAPONS FIELD. WHILE HE ASSERTS THE UK COULD NOT IN
FORESEEABLE FUTURE PART COMPANY WITH U.S., IT WOULD BE
PRUDENT FOR THE UK TO BE LESS RELIANT ON AN INCREASINGLY
NATIONALISTIC MOOD IN CONGRESS OR AN ADMINISTRATION PRE-
OCCUPIED WITH U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. JULIAN CRITCHLEY, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND VICE
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CHAIRMAN OF THE PARTY'S DEFENSE COMMITTEE, WRITES IN THE
MAY 24 ISSUE OF THE DAILY TELEGRAPH UNDER HEADLINE "A
FRENCH CONNECTION IN NUCLEAR ARMS." HE FIRST CONSIDERS
THE NEED FOR BRITAIN TO MAINTAIN A NUCLEAR DETERRENT
AND ANSWERS AFFIRMATIVELY. "IF WORST COMES TO WORST,
THE DEVASTATION WHICH A SINGLE POLARIS SUBMARINE COULD
WREAK ON RUSSIA SHOULD SUFFICE TO DISSUADE THE SOVIET

LEADERS FROM MAKING OR THREATENING A FIRST STRIKE AGAINST
BRITAIN."

2. HE LISTS THREE OPTIONS FOR RENEWING THE UK NUCLEAR
DETERRENT: A) TOTAL RELIANCE ON U.S.; B) GOING IT
ALONE; AND C) COLLABORATION WITH THE OTHER TWO NATO
NUCLEAR POWERS, THE U.S. AND FRANCE.

3. CRITCHLEY ACKNOWLEDGES THE "OBVIOUS ADVANTAGES FROM
A TECHNICAL VIEWPOINT OF CONTINUING THE PRESENT RELIANCE
ON AMERICAN COOPERATION."HOWEVER, 'POLITICAL CONSIDERA-
TIONS ARE NOT SO SIMPLE." WHILE PRESIDENT CARTER'S
ADMINISTRATION REMAINS FAITHFUL TO THE ATLANTIC
ALLIANCE, "IT IS CONGRESS MORE THAN WHITE HOUSE THAT HAS
THE WHIP HAND IN FOREIGN POLICY, AND ITS PRESENT MOOD IS
VERY NATIONALISTIC. IT WOULD BE IMPRUDENT FOR BRITAIN
NOT TO BE READY FOR THIS NATIONALISTIC TREND IN AMERICAN
OPINION, AND FOR THE ADMINISTRATION'S PREOCCUPATION WITH
U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS TO HAVE AS THEIR LOGICAL SEQUEL A
GROWING DISINCLINATION TO RISK WAR WITH THE USSR FOR THE
SAKE OF EUROPE. CARTER'S AMERICA IS THE POLITICAL
REASON FOR EXAMINING ALTERNATIVES TO DEPENDENCE ON THE
U.S. DETERRENT."

4. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES THE PRACTICAL POSSIBILITIES
FOR COLLABORATION WITH THE FRANCE OF PRESIDENT GISCARD
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SHOULD BE STUDIED CAREFULLY. THERE IS NO QUESTION OF
FRANCE'S LOYALTY TO THE COLLECTIVE DEFENSE OF THE WEST,
AS A SIGNATORY OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY AND THE
(WEU) TREATY OF BRUSSELS. THERE CAN BE NO JOINT COMMAND
OR FORCE IN VIEW OF FRANCE'S COMMITMENT TO AN INDEPENDENT

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DEFENSE POLICY. MOREOVER, THE NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY PREVENTS TRANSFERS OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS FROM BRITAIN TO FRANCE, BUT DOES NOT LIMIT TRANSFERS IN THE REVERSE DIRECTION (E.G., SOLID FUEL FOR FRENCH-MADE MISSILES), OR COORDINATION OF TARGETTING AND DELIVERY SYSTEMS. HE ADMITS THE BRITISH HAVE MORE TO GAIN THAN THE FRENCH, BUT NOTES THERE MAY BE OTHER PRACTICAL WAYS OF COOPERATION, SUCH AS SHIPBUILDING WHEN NEW SUBMARINE HULLS ARE NEEDED. IT IS TIME, HE CONCLUDES, FOR CONSERVATIVES TO CONSIDER MOST SERIOUSLY THE PROPOSAL OF AN ANGLO-FRENCH NUCLEAR ENTENTE.

5. COMMENT. CRITCHLEY'S VIEWS HAVE NOT BEEN
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REFLECTED IN OFFICIAL CONSERVATIVE PARTY POLICY. THE ARTICLE DOES NOT CALL FOR AN EITHER/OR CHOICE BETWEEN THE U.S. AND FRANCE, BUT REFLECTS THE UNCERTAINTY OF SOME CONSERVATIVES ABOUT THE CONSISTENCY OF AMERICAN POLICY IN THE CURRENT WASHINGTON ATMOSPHERE. HIS IDEAS ALSO PARALLEL TO SOME EXTENT THOSE OF THE CONSERVATIVE BOW GROUP, WHO FAVOR MORE EUROPEAN-BASED COOPERATIVE DEFENSE PROJECTS. WE CURRENTLY DETECT LITTLE ENTHUSIASM IN WHITEHALL FOR A NUCLEAR FRENCH CONNECTION, NOR DO WE BELIEVE THIS WOULD BE A MAJOR ELECTORAL ISSUE.

6. CRITCHLEY CHIDES THE LEFTWING LABORITES FOR THEIR OPPOSITION TO FURTHER NUCLEAR PROGRAMS, AS WELL AS DEFENSE MINISTER MULLEY FOR SWEEPING THE SUBJECT UNDER

THE RUG. WE ESTIMATE THE CALLAGHAN GOVERNMENT WILL NOT
WANT TO DISCUSS POLARIS FOLLOW-ON BEFORE THE ELECTIONS.
THE 1974 PARTY MANIFESTO RENOUNCES A FOLLOW-
ON TO POLARIS, BUT THERE ARE RIGHTWING LABORITES WHO
WOULD TREAT THE FOLLOW-ON ISSUE SYMPATHETICALLY. SUCH
A CLEARLY DEVISIVE ISSUE WITHIN LABOR'S RANKS IS A GOOD
ONE FOR CALLAHAN TO AVOID.

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